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MEMORIAL SERMONS

Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary

FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF ROXBURY

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844 Rox.

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MEMORIAL SERMONS

IN RECOGNITION OF THE

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE FOUNDING OF THE

First Religious Society in Roxbury.

BY THE MINISTER,

REV. JOHN GRAHAM BROOKS.

MARCH 26, 1882. APRIL 2, 1882.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE SOCIETY
BY GEO. H. ELLIS.
1882.

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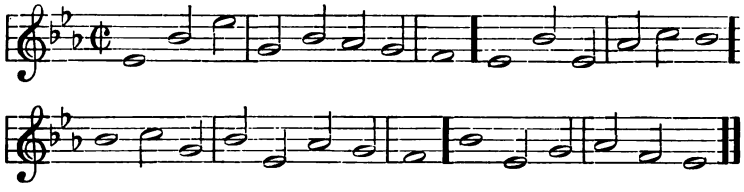
MARCH 26, 1882.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY.

ANTHEM.

READING OF SCRIPTURE.

PSALM 105.

As used in 1630. CAMBRIDGE TUNE, from Playford's Psalms.

Give praises unto God the Lord,
And call upon his name;
Among the people eke declare
His works to spread his fame.

He brought his people forth with mirth,
And his elect with joy
Out of the cruel land where they
Had lived in great annoy.

And of the heathen men he gave,
To them the fruitful lands,
The labor of the people eke
They took into their hands,

That they his holy statutes might
Observe forevermore,
And faithfully obey his laws,
Praise ye the Lord therefor.

PRAYER.

PSALM 107.

From Bay Psalm Book, 1640. TUNE: "Dundee."

O give yee thanks unto the Lord,
because that good is hee:
because his loving kindness lasts
to perpetuitee

So let the Lord's redeem'd say: whom
hee freed from th' enemies hands:
and gathred them from East & West,
from South & Northerne lands

I' th desart in a desart way
they wandred: no towne finde,
to dwell in. Hungry & thirsty:
their soule within them pinde.

Then did they to Jehovah cry
when they were in distresse:
who did them set at liberty
out of their anguishes

In such a way that was most right
he led them forth also:
that to a city which they might
inhabit they might go.

O that men would Jehovah prayse
for his great goodness then:
& for his workings wonderfull
unto the sonnes of men.

ADDRESS,

BY THE MINISTER, REV. J. G. BROOKS.

Original Hymn, sung at the 200th Anniversary. TUNE: "Old Hundred."

In peril here our Fathers stood:
Around them was the solitude
Of the deep forest, casting down
The glory of its summer crown.

Borne on the faith that dar'd the sea,
Their hearts went up, O God, to thee:
That temple with its arch of sky
Rung with their grateful melody.

In peace and plenty here we stand,—
The children of that suffering band.
They sow'd in tears: the harvest waves
In joyful bounty 'round their graves.

And have our hearts no thanks to raise?
God of our Fathers, may our praise
Be ceaseless as thy love; oh, give
That spirit that shall make us live,

In joy and woe, through youth and age,
More worthy of our heritage;
And, when these forms have long been dust,
Be Thou our children's children's trust.

BENEDICTION.

FIRST SERMON, MARCH 26.

"I judged it an act of impiety to see the renown of shining acts and useful sentiments go down into oblivion."

THESE words of Theodoret, a kind of Church Father of the fourth century, were used by Cotton Mather as a text for a portion of our church history. They may as fitly be used to-day for the two centuries that followed Eliot's brave beginnings.

If it is an impiety to forget the achievements of true men in the past, it is no less a virtue to remember and celebrate them. We are born out of the past and owe to it every treasure that we possess, yet without remorse easily forget it. The past remains with us to warn, instruct, inspire only when we turn reverently toward her, resolved to keep all her glories in grateful recognition. Monuments must be built, old landmarks must be preserved at a cost from which the present often shrinks. Especially must institutions like the Church keep alive and fresh all that has been best in the past, or they will pay dearly for the neglect. When we cut ourselves off from the past, even by forgetfulness, we lose for it that veneration which is the inspiration of our

highest service even to the present. We here are happy in having a history which needs only to be known to kindle in us something both of enthusiasm and of gratitude.

A question of date first meets us. Upon the gallery is written 1631. This has been thought by some to be an error. The date is not, I think, necessarily wrong. The question depends upon the meaning which is attached to the term "founding of a church." If the calling of the first minister founds the church, the date should be 1632; for it will soon be two hundred and fifty years since Mr. Thomas Welde was settled as the first pastor. This in Christian history has not, however, been considered as the beginning of the Church. The Church has had its beginning in the first gathering of the people to discuss their plans and hopes. Is it probable that the people here, while they were yet going to Dorchester to worship, met for such purpose? It seems to me almost certain that they did thus meet; but, as we have no record of the fact, we have our memorial service upon the anniversary of an assured date, 1632, when Mr. Welde became the first minister Let it not be understood, however, that this in any way impairs the veracity of the words "gathered in 1631."

There is much personal and family history that has made the past of this society so honorable,

which we must pass in silence. Direct descendants of the first three ministers are still among our worshippers. There are names among the officers of the church, Alcock, Heath, Bowles and others, many names of laymen, whose record adds to our faith in man and in the religious ends for which they sacrificed so much. There are names of women, from the wife of Eliot to those whom many of you delight to remember, like Miss Caroline Porter's and Miss Amory Lowell's, whose influence is still a ministering power in our midst, pure and strong. Nor can I let the occasion pass without a word of earnest and willing tribute to Mr. Adams Ayer. For many years, his service to this church, and especially to the Sunday-school, was given so generously and with such unfailing kindliness of spirit as to claim from us all sincere and lasting gratitude. From earliest days there is indeed most ample record of virtues that should be vividly retold to each generation.

There is a power over us of such ancestry which we have not in America learned to prize at its true value. To know any prominent characteristic virtue of those from whom we spring is not only to be influenced by it: it is to be put under an obligation to renew that virtue and to keep it alive.

Mediæval knights learned by heart the records of past heroism in their house, that they might sustain still its fame for prowess. So we, by holding com-

munion with the worthier deeds of our forefathers, are put upon our honor to sustain still all that nobly distinguished them.

Upon this and the following Sunday, I shall attempt little except to bring before you the previous ministries over this church: this morning, recalling that of Mr. Welde and of Mr. Eliot; upon next Sunday, together with a notice of the succeeding pastors, I shall add, especially for the sake of the younger of my hearers, some characteristics of the age,— the various church buildings, the earlier forms of worship, and such incidental history as may best help us to realize those first noble beginnings which it would indeed be an impiety to let "pass down into oblivion."

Necessarily we must dwell longest upon three or four of the names. In a considerable succession of public servants in any sphere, those who signally illustrate the higher virtues must be exceptional; but, as I have read the stories of these lives, and through them largely the history of this church, it has been with a growing reverence for them and for the value of their work in this community. It is an open page from Welde to Putnam. For Dr. Putnam's ministry one need not turn to any faded folios. He is as a living presence among you still. To your hearts he still speaks graciously and persuasively as of old. It is a blessed quality of our nature that it

can, in spite of death, retain the companionship of such a life. It will soon be seven years since I first met him in the vestry and came with him into the pulpit, since when I have not ceased to read in living and grateful memories the story of his influence.

Of the first minister comparatively little is known except of a public character. Speaking and writing, he was ever before the public, absorbed in the great questions of the day. According to a letter communicated to a recent number of the *Register of the Historical Society*, "he received in 1613 his degree at Trinity College, Cambridge, England, and five years later his degree of M.A." He was for some time minister in Essex; "but, not submitting to the ceremonies, the place was too hot for him, and he was forced to quit it and go over to New England." Five years after his coming here, he is distinguished among the leading opponents of Mrs. Hutchinson. Two years later, in 1639, he assisted Mr. Eliot and Mr. Mather of Dorchester in preparing the *Bay Psalm Book.*

We see from Winthrop's Journal that Mr. Welde's advice in all matters of public concern was valued. The records of the colony testify to the same confidence. They contain this entry, June 2, 1641: "The Court doth entreat leave of the church of Salem for Mr. Peters, of the church of Roxbury for Mr. Welde, and of the church of Boston for Mr.

Hibbens, to go to England upon some weighty occasions for the good of the country." Mr. Welde went not to return.

If we would see him truly, we have first to look away from the man to the religious and political movements amid which he acted. Wherever we see him, he represents that characteristic of the Puritans which has had cast upon it so much blame: he seems to have been consistent in his passionate hostility to all religious opinions which differed from his own. Before leaving England for America, he had already spoken hotly against Laud's religious tyranny; had shown indeed there the selfsame spirit that he showed here. In England he could not conform to the established order of worship, but spoke out so bravely as to imperil his liberty if not his life. Once here, he tnrns against those who cherish another faith with the same strength of feeling. In England he was a heretic, and suffered for it; here he did what he could to make those suffer whom he considered heretics.

Strength characterizes him,—strength of mind, strength of prejudice, strength of religious opinion. From the writings which he has left, it appears that his chief interest is the preservation of certain right opinions in religion. In their defence he uses a diction which reminds us of the Pope's anathemas. Anne Hutchinson he pursued with pitiless spirit.

He had no small part in her banishment, although her spirit and her life were beautiful with that gentleness which the church that cast her out so sadly needed. As opposed to those who believed in the "law" in religion, Mrs. Hutchinson believed in the free dwelling of God's grace in the human soul. The First Church in Boston with its minister she almost completely won over to her faith; but action so vigorous was taken by other churches that the "law" triumphed and she was banished, not however until she had spent several months in Roxbury, where she was visited by Mr. Welde, who hoped still to reclaim her, but hoped in vain.

Although Mr. Welde showed toward the Quakers, Jews, Anabaptists, the same bitterness of feeling as toward Mrs. Hutchinson and her party, I have introduced her truly saintly life, firstly, because light is thus thrown upon the strong traits of character which we find in Mr. Welde; secondly, because of the blame that has been laid at his door.

This feeling against our first minister is the same in kind as that which has shown itself in greater or less intensity of criticism against the Puritans. Mr. Welde was Puritan of the Puritans, and made their cause passionately his own. A question with which the last generation especially has made us familiar best expresses this spirit against the Puritans,— "What are we to think of men who fled from

religious bigotry in England to show here the same inhuman temper as that from which they fled?"

The simplest historical facts are quite enough to meet the difficulty. Such a question as the above assumes the existence at that time of a spirit which had not yet been born into the world. Here and there, an exceptional man or woman rose to a full appreciation of religious freedom; but this was not true of any existing community. When we blame Mr. Welde for his part in worrying Mrs. Hutchinson and her party out of their homes here, we judge from that principle of almost universal toleration which has at last been born for all our people. The principle is, however, a new possession. For Mr. Welde or for the Puritans, no such principle existed. Such a thought of religious toleration was as far off in the future as the thought of universal suffrage. Do we blame them that they did not allow an unrestricted franchise? Religious toleration existed only here and there in an uncommon spirit. By the general body of society, it was as yet undreamed of. But it is said they insisted upon their right to think and worship freely in England, yet would accord no such privilege to Roger Williams and others here. This is an error. The Puritans did not come here for the purpose of being intellectually free or leaving to others such freedom. They came for the sake of certain of

their own very precious and very definite beliefs. They came not for any universal freedom, as is so often said, but for freedom to think, to express, to realize those special ideas; and it should be remembered that they did not ask in England entire freedom in religious opinion, but only to be free from a few unbearable interdicts under which they suffered.

We may regret that they had not advanced far enough to be more perfect than they were. They had the limitations of their age, as we have of ours. It is but fair, however, to remember that they neither asked nor allowed anything like perfect freedom in religion. Their object was widely different from our own. They are often criticised as if they came to found a democracy where all should be equal. They had no such thought. They came to found a theocracy and a government based upon very clearly defined religious ideas that were dearer to them than freedom, or equality, or life.

One historical fact will greatly help us to a more generous and to a truer understanding of those traits in the Puritan character which Mr. Welde illustrated, namely, that the Puritans took for themselves Pym's doctrine in England, which was this: that it is the duty of legislators to establish the true religion and to punish the false.

It was this question of a true religion as they

understood it, and of establishing it in the face of all enemies, before which all other interests paled. They did not wish ill to the Quakers so much as they wished them out of their way, that they might more easily realize their idea of a state based upon religion. The Quakers held not only religious but social and political views abhorrent to the Puritans. Indeed, it is doubtful if the Puritan idea could have succeeded, if it had been so changed as to admit the projects of the Quakers, who wholly refused to recognize the laws, the social and political principles, dearest to the Puritans.

We may easily see how far they were from any conception of freedom, as we understand it. A petition was sent to the magistrates in 1646 for a very slight extension of the franchise. The petitioners were thrown into prison. Cotton, the great leader both in political and religious thought, spoke most bitterly against democracy. Some among them claimed too much for commerce, and John Higginson wrote, "This is never to be forgotten: that our New England is originally a plantation of religion, and not a plantation of trade; and if any man among us make religion as twelve, and trade as thirteen, let such man know that he has neither the spirit of a true New England man nor yet of a sincere Christian."

Puritan opinion had developed thus far. Why

should we expect these men, only by crossing the ocean, to change their nature,—in the course of a few months to advance a century?

Those of the type of Roger Williams and Mrs. Hutchinson were, it is true, far less bound by tradition; but Church and State were then absolutely one, and not elastic enough to admit all kinds of opinions and vagaries. Rhode Island became an asylum for them. They had opportunity there to realize their ideal. What did they realize? In education, in social progress,—yes, in real liberty, they realized nothing that can be favorably compared with the results of the Puritan idea as it developed in Massachusetts, controlled as it was by our so-called bigoted forefathers. English history has been a slow growth, and it can be truly said of the Puritans that in coming here they took a long step in advance.

Is it not a little like intolerance in us to ask of them more than this? Can we free ourselves from *our* time, from its prejudices and limitations, and pass at a bound into the next age with its unborn freedom and light?

We both live and allow a larger freedom than did the last generation. In this, we obey the law of historical progress. Our forefathers did no less. They advanced in opinion far beyond that which they had left in England. They exercised here a

far wider toleration than that to which they had been educated in their old home, and history will some time acknowledge that they could not do more and remain men. We may measure their readiness to adopt more generous opinions, even by that most terrible of questions, the witch-burning.

Our feeling, as we look back upon that tragedy, is changed, when we realize that it was the wisest and most respected judgment of the time that witches existed. The greatest lawyers of the time believed it. By all existing law,— the mediæval and the church laws,— witchcraft was condemned. The penalty was death. Many years after our last witch was burned, Blackstone wrote in his Commentaries these words,—

"To deny the possibility, nay, actual existence of witchcraft and sorcery is flatly to contradict the revealed word of God; and the thing itself is a truth to which every nation in the world hath in its turn borne testimony."

What must we expect of those who — two generations before these Commentaries were written — sat in legal judgment upon those who insisted themselves that they were witches? Could they do other than interpret and apply the law? Law moves on slowly from precedent to precedent. They who judge of tabulated crimes must appeal to precedent. Cotton Mather gives a long list of legal authorities which

judges consulted in an age when such humane spirits as Baxter and Sir Thomas Brown believed in witches.

It was a period of strange and unnatural frenzy. In the islands from which our law came, thirty thousand supposed witches had been condemned to death. In Scotland alone, within a period of ten years, four thousand fell. French authorities have recorded more than seventy thousand, Germany a far greater number still. That same mania fell upon us here, when to be a witch was to be a criminal worthy of death. Our judges, as they passed sentence, had one legal duty; namely, to turn back to the great authorities. Yet how grandly they rose above that weight of custom! We, remembering the hosts that had suffered in the most civilized parts of Europe, may ask, How many suffered in our State? Nineteen! In spite of all the law in Europe, in spite of their faith in the existence of witchcraft, they so soon, and with so few victims, rose to a brave confession of their error, and to the practice of a humanity which no vested dignity of opinion should longer restrain.

This darker moment in our New England history was long after the death of our first minister. I have however introduced it, because that period, with its difficulties of faith and opinion, helps us to understand the individual. If, as Mr. Welde did, he represent the sterner and more conservative spirit of the Puritans, we shall not wholly free them from

blame. Mr. Welde had the faults of his own qualities. We, however, do no graver injustice to the Puritans; nor can we in any way more fatally convict ourselves of the very fault that we censure in them than by speaking of them as if they were informed by the spirit of an age that came more than a century after their day.

In November, but five months after Mr. Welde's settlement, came John Eliot to Roxbury. He became an associate minister with Welde, under the name of teacher, although their duties must have been the same. He, too, was born in Essex, England, and was educated at Cambridge.

Essex, especially the little town of Nazing, where Eliot was born, sent out many whose descendants still live among us. Upon the records of the Nazing church stand seven familiar names, among which are Heath, Eliot, Graves, Ruggles, and Curtis. Eliot taught for a time, after leaving the University, in the family of Thomas Hooker. He sailed for America in November, 1631, and was at once welcomed by the First Church in Boston, where he labored in the absence of the pastor, Mr. Wilson, until he came here. They were eager to keep him at the First Church; but, for reasons that may be seen in our Church Records, he preferred this church. He worked with the senior pastor until 1641. Mr. Welde then went to England as colonial

agent, where he lived until his death, which occurred in London, on March 23, 1661.

Eliot's spirit was as gentle as Welde's was austere. In the *Magnalia*, we read from one who had a right to speak of Eliot these words by Cotton Mather:—

> He that will write of Eliot must write of his charity, or say nothing. His charity was a star of the first magnitude in the bright constellation of his virtues, and the rays of it were wonderfully various and extensive. His liberality to pious uses, whether public or private, went much beyond the proportions of his little estate in this world. Many hundred pounds did he freely bestow upon the poor; and he would, with very forcible importunities, press his neighbor to join with him in such beneficences. . . . He did not put off his charity to be put in his last will, as many who therein show that their charity is against their will; but he was his own administrator. He made his own hands his executors, and his own eyes his overseers.

It is this spirit which the age most needed. It was happy for this church that, having Welde, it had Eliot. Yet we may see in Eliot's history how hard — yes, how almost impossible it is — to rise far above one's age and its opinions. He opposed earnestly Mrs. Hutchinson and all her kind, and doubtless did not add to her comfort while staying in Roxbury. His faults do not seem to be his own, but rather to be thrust upon him. I am sure it was against his nature to pain by word or pen any human being. I do not think it was pleasant

to him to make his disciplinary call upon Mrs. Hutchinson or write a severe letter against the Anabaptist. The first minister evidently enjoyed it. Eliot, wherever we see him, is moved by a spirit of humanity deep and tender as it was broad.

The passion of his life was the good of his race. It was no narrow sympathy. As an educator he was foremost in every generous movement that has permanently enriched the intellectual life of this town. In his last years a large grant of land was made by him to what is now the "Eliot School" in Jamaica Plain. Mather's words best show us the fervor of his interest in the establishment of schools:—

> It was his perpetual resolution and activity to support a good school in the town that belonged unto him. A grammar school he would always have upon the place, whatever it cost him; and he importuned all other places to have the like. I cannot forget the ardor with which some heard him pray in a synod of these churches, which met at Boston to consider how the miscarriages which were among us might be prevented. I say with what fervor he uttered an expression to this purpose: "Lord, for schools everywhere among us! That our schools may flourish! That every member of this assembly may go home and procure a good school to be encouraged in the town in which he lives! That, before we die, we may be so happy as to see a good school encouraged in every plantation of the country." God so blessed his endeavors that Roxbury could not live quietly without a free school in the town; and the issue of it has been one thing which has almost made me put the title of *Schola illustris* upon that little nursery,— that is, that Roxbury has afforded more scholars, first for the

college and then for the public, than any town of its bigness, or, if I mistake not, of twice its bigness in all New England.

Of that wider interest which has made his name illustrious, but little can here be said. Most of us have long been familiar with at least the general outlines of his scheme to uplift the Indians; yet do any of us realize how patient, how brave, how unselfish a struggle it was? His passion to civilize and Christianize this unhappy race was divine, his consecration to the cause so entire that no obstacle discouraged him or danger appalled. His own ease, money, life, were as nothing. Many times, he faced death with that quiet and fearless spirit which characterizes the truest courage that man can show. Far from home, alone among the savages, he is dangerously threatened by a chief. "I am engaged," he replies, "in the work of God; and God is with me. I fear not all the sachems in the country. I shall go on my way, and do you touch me if you dare." This is the man who fills his pockets with cakes and apples for the Indian children, when he sets forth upon his weekly visit to his larger parish.

So filled was he with that last crowning gift of the Christian spirit, a loving charity, that in his last days he is possessed by it, when all other powers have failed him. "Alas!" he says, "I have lost everything. My understanding fails me, my utter-

ance fails me; but, thank God, my charity holds out still. I find that rather grows than fails."

The translation of the Bible into the Indian tongue is acknowledged by all scholars to have been an intellectual feat sufficient of itself to signalize any one who achieved it. Cotton Mather believed that the devils could easily manage Greek and Latin, but gave up at once the speech of the native American. This work of Eliot drew from one of the most distinguished of European scholars words of most unqualified praise. A book which he was just publishing was dedicated to Eliot, the dedication containing these words: "To the very Rev. and pious John Eliot, the indefatigable and faithful minister and venerable apostle to the Indians in America, who has translated and published in the American tongue by an Atlean labor the Bible, and first preached the word of God to the Americans in the Indian tongue."

See him upon one of his journeys through a country with no roads, to the "Nashaway" tribe in New Hampshire. This in early spring. The streams are high and swift. Yet he swims them upon his horse until it fails him, when he continues on foot. He is wet to the skin day after day. Often, at night, he can light no fire; but, as he halts for rest, he removes his boots to wring the water from his socks. He tells it all very simply, as if it

were no great thing: "God stepped in and helped." He adds, "I considered that word of God, 'Endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ.'"

Note again, if we would see the spirit of the man, the kind and extent of opposition which he met without flinching. The merchants grew hostile, because he interfered with their Indian trade. The sympathy of the Court, given at first, was continually dying out, and leaving him with no support. The magistrates were several times so faithless both to the letter and spirit of their promises as to counteract some of his most cherished plans. Many of those who were at first advisers and friends cooled toward him, and withdrew their help. A trader could undo all his work for the week by sending a cask of spirits into the camp at Dorchester or Natick. He mounted his horse upon the following week with that unfaltering hope which only the divinest faith knows.

Once among the Indians, his real difficulties began. The medicine-men hated him and his work, because it undermined their own. Secretly, they put all manner of obstacles in his way. Several of the chiefs would not tolerate his presence. But the coolness of friends, the sneers of enemies, the misrepresentations of traders, the withdrawal of help from Court and magistrates, seem never once to have shaken his faith in the worth and hopefulness of his endeavors.

It was not a religious work alone that he strove to do. His aims were practical. He began with their nearest wants: if hungry, he brought bread; if naked, he clothed them. The various uses of tools he eagerly strove to teach them,— the planting of trees, the rearing of vegetables and grains, the building of fences and houses with separate apartments. A meeting-house was to be within the fort, and also the school-house for the training of Indians who were themselves to become teachers to their own people. This was his plan for Natick.

In some of the unpublished letters in the Historical Rooms, Eliot writes to a London friend about the wants of his school: paper and ink-horns are wanted; tools of all sorts are asked for. He promises to be discreet in giving them out. "I give," he says, "small gifts, and these but seldom. What shall come to my hand of these tools I intend to keep in a common stock, to lend to one as well as another, that no man may sit idle or lose a day's work."

We find Eliot not only preaching to them from Ezekiel an hour and a quarter, but carrying crowbars, shovels, and tools of various descriptions,— not only making rules to help them conquer their sins, like gambling, drunkenness, and wife-beating, but instructing them even in their wigwams to partition off the space into rooms, that the first lessons of

modesty may be taught. Great stress is laid upon cleanliness as next to godliness. The women are taught to spin, and the men to dig ditches and hew timber; in the winter, to make brooms, baskets, and staves.

It is indeed difficult to see what we have done more for the Indians after two and a quarter centuries than apply with varying success the spirit of Eliot's scheme. With all our experience, with all means and power at our command, we have done so little toward the solution of the problem as to make us wonder that he, at such a time and under such circumstances, did so much.

Very modestly, he writes back to England about this work, not painting it in high colors, although he drew from England most of his pecuniary support. He says of his Indian converts, "We know the confession of very many of them is mere paint." He spoke of his work thus: "Also they have been poor and small doings, and I'll be the man that shall throw the first stone at them all."

Mather says, in 1687, there were six New England churches of Indians, eighteen assemblies, twenty-four native preachers. All of which indicates the magnitude and promise of the work at that date.

What might have come of it, had the work, as Eliot planned it, gone on in his own spirit? What, but for that most terrible event of those days, King Philip's war?

There is pathos in those words quoted in 1836, by Dr. Putnam, from one of Eliot's biographers: —

> In consequence of the excitement, the Court passed an order that the Indians at Natick be removed to Deer Island. The Indians sadly but quietly submitted. Their spiritual father and ever faithful friend, Mr. Eliot, met them.
>
> That settlement toward which the heart of the good apostle had yearned alike through seasons of discouragement and of hope, the foundations of which were laid by his own hands and hallowed by his own prayers; where the tree of life, as he believed, was firmly rooted in the wilderness; where, by the patient labor of years, he had made the word of God understood, and had reared civil and social institutions; that settlement which, probably next to his own home, he loved better than anything else on earth,— is suddenly broken up, and its inhabitants are hurried away from their fields and homes, into what is little better than an imprisonment. At the hour of their departure, the venerable man, on whose head more than seventy winters had shed their frosts, stands with them on the bank of the river to pour forth his prayers for them, to mingle his tears with theirs, and to teach them the lesson, not of resentment against man, but of submission to God,— the lesson of meekness and of strong endurance.

We now look back to ask the question, What remains of his great endeavor? The answer is that which must be made about a very large part of the world's most ideal devotion. Little remains of the work except the purpose and the spirit of it. But what after a few generations remains of any spiritual work more than this? The actual methods,

the external means, change with each age: only the inner life and spirit abide. Would we to-day truly benefit that race which we have so profoundly wronged? We must go back and take up again the essential part of Eliot's plan.

Even while Eliot worked, that other spirit wrought fiercely against the Indian. Eliot opposed it, as all true humanity opposes it to-day. It showed itself in high quarters then as it does to-day. The minister at North Hampton wrote to our Governor Dudley that the Indians should be considered thieves and murderers, and hunted with dogs, as they do bears. The Pequots by the same spirit were exterminated, after they had been conquered in honorable warfare. In Marblehead, the women who, coming from church, killed two Indians, were blessed and thanked for it. This was the age when Plymouth sent the severed hand of King Philip to Boston, and the clergy thanked God over the ghastly offering.

Through a few other hearts like Eliot's, that other spirit promised by the Master was struggling to show itself. John Robinson had said, "Oh that they had converted some before they had killed them!" This last was Eliot's method. We still, if we would deal honorably or successfully with the Indians, have to take up again the spirit of the true apostle.

Richard Baxter, the celebrated English clergyman,

in a letter to Eliot a few years before his decease, thus expresses his opinion of his labors: "There is no man on earth whose work I consider more honorable than yours. The industry of the Jesuits and friars, and their successes in Congo, Japan, and China, shame us all, save you."

An old tradition says, "As long as Eliot is alive, the country can never perish." It would be true always that, as long as such a spirit was kept alive by the fidelity of a few such men as he, no noble cause could die. When he considered that he could no longer do duty for the parish on account of extreme feebleness, he could not rest without helping some one, believing as he did that the little power that was left was sacred for such uses as it might serve. He therefore urged the families within two or three miles of the house to send their negro servants to be taught by him. After he could not leave his house, he undertook the teaching of a child that had lost its sight, spending thus many hours each week in filling the child's mind with the finest Scripture passages.

During a larger part of his long ministry, nearly sixty years, he had the help first of Mr. Welde, until 1641, then of two colleagues,—Samuel Danforth, who was ordained in 1650, and labored until his death in 1674. Nehemiah Walter did not come until 1688, when Eliot was eighty-four years of age.

With all his more distant and exhaustive duties, never is there a sign of any neglect of the common parish work. We might apply to him, in his fidelity to these nearer and humbler duties, Chaucer's well-known lines in his *Canterbury Tales:*—

> "A clerk
> That Christ's pure gospel would sincerely preach
> And his parishioners devoutly teach.
> Benign he was, and wondrous diligent,
> And in adversity full patient.
> Wide was his cure, the houses far asunder;
> Yet never failed he, nor for rain or thunder,
> In sickness or mishap to visit all,
> The furthest in his parish, great and small.
> This noble example to his flock he gave,
> That first he wrought and afterwards he taught."

The good man now thought himself a cumberer of the ground, and longed for the great rest of the other life,—the rest which he had so well earned. He died peacefully in 1690. His remains were placed in what is now the parish tomb, in the old burial-ground at the corner of Washington and Eustis Streets.

Mr. Eliot left behind him four sons, who were graduated at Cambridge, and became ministers. It is said that he met all their college expenses. It passes the understanding to know how; for he had at most but little money, and he seems to have given that broadcast in charity.

This sacred memory should never be recalled in this pulpit without a word of tribute to the wife who seems in all things to have been worthy of the husband. Skilled in the virtues of the home, mistress of all its needs, she was ever at the service of the poor and sick. Her prudence is always spoken of, and it was needed. We cannot help wondering how she met her husband when he returned empty-handed from the treasurer's, because he could not loose the knots of the handkerchief that held the quarter's salary, and thus gave it all to the sick woman. If she reproached him, we may be sure it was in gentleness; for the poor loved her too. When accidents befell or sickness came, it was to her that they often sent. Her skill was as apt as it was ready for all needs.

It is a touching scene when the husband stands over the coffin after her death in her eighty-fourth year to tell the throng of people of her virtues and her worth.

Of these lives so at one in every act that was beautiful with the Christ spirit, we may use in closing those words of the Master whom they so nobly served. The words stand at the beginning of Mather's Life of Eliot. They may as fitly speak to us from its close: "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

SERVICES UPON THE SECOND SUNDAY.

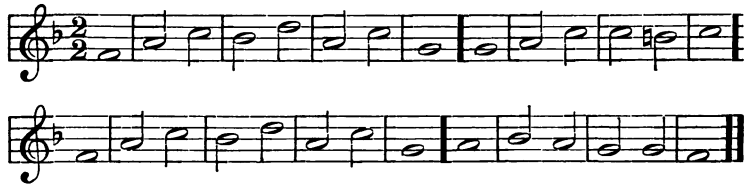
APRIL 2, 1882.

ORGAN VOLUNTARY.

ANTHEM.

READING OF SCRIPTURE.

PSALM 121.

The TUNE "York," from Rev. John Tufts' book, 1714. The first music in parts published in New England.

1. I lift my Eyes up to the Hills: || From whence should come my help? ||
2. My help's from the ETERNAL God, || who made the heav'ns and earth. ||
3. He will not let thy foot be mov'd; || thy keeper slumbers not. ||
4. Lo, He that keepeth Israel; || He slumbers not, nor sleeps. ||
5. Th' ETERNAL God is He who is || thy *watchful* Keeper still; Th' ETERNAL God becomes thy shade: || at thy right hand *He stands*. ||
6. The Sun shall not smite thee by Day; || nor shall the Moon by Night. ||
7. Th' ETERNAL keeps thee from all ill; || He shall preserve thy soul. ||
8. Th' ETERNAL keeps thy going out; || and keeps thy coming in; || He does it from this time, and will || do it forevermore. ||

From Mather's *Psalterium Americanum*, 1718.

PRAYER.

PSALM 145.

Words as used in 1630. TUNE: St. Anns, 1687.

Here will I laud my God and King,
And bless thy name for aye;
Forever will I praise thy name,
And bless thee day by day.

I of thy glorious majesty
The beauty will record,
And meditate upon thy works,
Most wonderful O Lord.

Great is the Lord most worthy praise
His greatness none can reach,
From race to race they shall thy works
Praise, and thy power preach.

And they shall of thy power and of
Thy fearful acts declare;
And I to publish all abroad,
Thy greatness will not spare.

ADDRESS,

BY THE MINISTER, REV. J. G. BROOKS.

HYMN.

TUNE: "America."

My Country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,—
  Of thee I sing:
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the Pilgrim's pride,
From every mountain side
  Let freedom ring;

My native country, thee,—
Land of the noble free,—
  Thy name I love:
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills
  Like that above.

Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty,—
  To thee we sing:
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
  Great God, our King.

BENEDICTION.

SECOND SERMON, APRIL 2.

After Mr. Welde's return to England in 1641, Mr. Eliot was alone until 1650. The work among the Indians made the help of a colleague necessary, and Samuel Danforth, a student from Cambridge, was called. Cotton Mather tells us that Mr. Danforth's father was an English gentleman of estate and influence. He came to America because driven to desperation by the English Church. Mr. Danforth was graduated in 1643, became an instructor in the college, and later a member of the corporation. Several descriptions of him as a preacher remain. All speak of him as mighty in the Scriptures, which means that he used them skilfully and freely in his discourses. He was a student of science, especially of that which has been called the divine science,—astronomy. He made calculations for almanacs. He loved to illustrate God's power from the stars. A comet gave him occasion for a great effort; and, if any special sins were rife, the heavenly phenomenon became in his hands a kind of divine vengeance. He is called both poet and mathematician. Two of his sons became ministers,—one at Dorches-

ter, one at Taunton. There are direct descendants from him now in our parish. One evidence of his strength is the effort made to call him away to other fields of work. He remained faithful ever to the plainer duties of a pastor's life until his death in 1674, after a ministry of twenty-four years. But a few days after his death, the society gathered in the second meeting-house. Our church record contains in Eliot's hand these words: "My brother Danforth made the most glorious end that I ever saw." These further entries are also given: —

[1674] 15^{d} 9^{m} we first met & worshiped God in o^{r} new meeting house, but the l'd touched o^{r} thigh because yesterday my bro. Danforth fell sick.

19. 9^{m}. My bro. Danforth dyed in the Lord. it pleased the Lord to brighten his passage to glory. he greatly increased in the pow^{r} of his ministry, especially y^{e} last sumer. he cordially joyned wth me in maintaining the peace of the church. we consulted about the beautifying the house of God wth ruling elders, and to order the congregation into the primitive way of Collections.

22 9^{m}. a good Sab: & sac: blessed be the Lord, but sorrowfull, because o^{r} resp'ed Pasto^{r} was dead.

Eliot is again left alone fourteen years until 1688, when Nehemiah Walter was called. He was born in Ireland. His father came, as Eliot and Welde had come, because non-conformity to the Established Church made him uncomfortable. He is the scholar

of our line of ministers. He had a certain elegant ease in speaking and writing both French and Latin, which distinguished him when a young man. He became a critical student of Hebrew and Greek, and an authority among our American scholars upon Church History.

Materials about his life are very scanty. The best account of him, in his connection with the Church, is in Mr. Dillaway's History of the Grammar School in Roxbury, from which I take at length the following: —

> The good old minister was so charmed with the young preacher that, on the first day of hearing him, he requested members of the church to stop after the evening service, and was for putting it to vote whether they would give him a call. But the Hon. Joseph Dudley, afterwards Governor, notwithstanding he entertained a high opinion of Mr. Walter, thought so sudden a decision inexpedient, and persuaded Mr. Eliot to defer it for a while. After a short delay, a call was unanimously given, the brethren of the church making their choice on Sunday, July 15, 1688, and the inhabitants of the town in public assembly, on Sunday September 9, approving and confirming it.
>
> On Wednesday, Oct. 17, 1688, Mr. Walter was ordained, and preached the sermon himself, as was the custom at that time. Mr. Eliot, then in his eighty-fourth year, presided at the ordination, and gave the charge. When two ministers were settled over the same church, it was usual to call one pastor and the other teacher; but Mr. Eliot gave both these names to his colleague, and on his return from the ordination pleasantly said to Mr. Walter, "Brother, I have ordained you a teaching pastor, but don't be proud of it, for I always ordain my Indians so."

Throughout their joint ministry the relation was like that between father and son. Cotton Mather, in his Memoir of Eliot, says, "The good old man, like Aaron, as it were, disrobed himself with an unspeakable satisfaction when he beheld his garments spread upon a son so dear to him." . . .

In 1717, Mr. Walter's health began to be affected by his ministerial labors. . . . As an evidence of the importance attached to his services by his parishioners and others, it is stated that the occasion of his ceasing to preach was observed as a day of fasting and prayer, not only by his own flock, but by the ministers and people of the vicinity. In a few months, he was able to resume his labors, and continued them without assistance till Oct. 19, 1718, when his son, Thomas Walter, was ordained his colleague. This connection, unfortunately, was of short duration, being broken by the early death of the junior pastor.

The whole weight of the pastoral office again devolving upon the senior, his people, in consideration of his advanced age, and their great desire to retain his services as long as possible, relieved him from half of each Sunday's service by supplying the pulpit at their own expense when he did not preach.

Among his parishioners and warm friends was his Excellency Governor Dudley, who on many occasions bore testimony to the high estimation in which he held his minister. There was also the Governor's son, the Hon. Paul Dudley, for many years one of his Majesty's Council and Chief Justice of the Province, whose respect for Mr. Walter fully equalled, if it did not exceed, that of his father. Rev. Dr. Eliot, in his biography of Mr. Walter, says: "His discourses were always studied, and he delivered them with great animation, though with a feeble voice. He had a delicate bodily frame, and was small of stature." Rev. Dr. Chauncy regarded him as one of the most brilliant of our countrymen.

On the 25th of December, 1749, he was confined to his house by bodily indisposition, which gradually increased upon him, and

terminated in his decease, Sept. 17, 1759, in the eighty-seventh year of his age. His ministry and that of Mr. Eliot occupied a space of nearly one hundred and twenty years.

In 1750, Oliver Peabody was settled, two months after Mr. Walter's death. His ministry was but a year and a half. Nothing remains especially worthy of note of this short period. A sermon of Dr. Porter's has these words: "Even while Mr. Walter was living, Mr. Oliver Peabody, a young gentleman of acknowledged abilities and unimpeachable character, was invited to settle as colleague pastor. Short however was his ministry, short his life."

The predecessor of Dr. Porter, Amos Adams, was graduated from Cambridge in the year that Mr. Peabody died. In the following year, he was ordained. Several published sermons show him to have been so outspoken against the people's sins that we see some ground of the frequent complaint against his ministry. It may, indeed, have been one reason why they thought his sermons too long. To speak with such pitiless directness against each human sin must occasionally make the hearer feel that the preacher is unpleasantly personal.

He lived in the midst of those troublous times that brought in the Revolution. From the first, he gave himself to the cause. He preached for it, and wrote for it. He considered all soldiers quartered in the neighborhood his parishioners, and visited

them when sick, preaching to them when he could get them together. When the ministers met at Watertown to recommend the people to arm themselves, he was chosen scribe, which was a place of honor.

He fell a martyr to the cause as truly as if he had died in battle. He had done his work for the day here, and went fatigued to preach in the camp to the soldiers. The exposure cost him his life. Mr. Drake has printed in his admirable History the obituary notice from the Boston *Gazette*. It stands thus:—

> He spent his time and strength with pleasure in the service of a grateful people, till, by the distress of the times, they were dispersed, and he himself obliged to leave his habitation and pulpit, from which time his labors were increased; but, through an affection to the people of his charge, he went through them with cheerfulness, attending the small remainder of his flock every Sunday, though his family was removed to a distance among his friends. At the time he was seized with his last sickness, he was engaged as chaplain to a regiment in the Continental army, who paid the funeral honors to his remains on the following Saturday.

The church was now for seven years without a pastor. Mr. Adams died in 1775. Eliphalet Porter was settled in 1782. Not popular as a preacher, he yet possessed such valued gifts of sober common sense as to make his counsel prized in all practical difficulties. Beneath a gravity almost severe there

was a vein of humor that did not fail him in any emergency. Dr. Putnam, who was thrown into the closest personal relations with him, spoke the following words in a sermon delivered here almost fifty years ago:—

> Indeed, Dr. Porter's was a mind that seemed never to have been swayed or misled by any passion. Never was man farther from being the creature of passion; and this great circumstance, in connection with his clear and far-sighted understanding, is that which, while it precluded all brilliancy of mind, stamped him for a man of uncommon prudence and wisdom, and unexceptionable purity and probity of character, and made his life a most uniform and tranquil one. Had he a single enemy in the world, that enemy might almost be challenged to adduce one instance of moral or social wrong, or even of imprudence or folly. Never had enemy less power to do harm to a character. He was a friend to the whole family of man, and no degree of sin or folly could place a fellow-creature beyond the bounds of his charity and benevolent regards. He was a willing and faithful counsellor to all who sought his counsel, and to all with whom he felt sufficiently intimate to authorize his offering it. And his was advice which it seemed always safe to follow, and which it was seldom well to disregard. Even men near him in age were fain to receive it and be guided by it. If he stood not high among the praised, he was certainly pre-eminent among the trusted. Of his private and domestic character, I could speak that which I do know and testify that which I have seen; and I should rejoice to set it before his people as a model of an equable temper and of unfailing and affectionate kindness, securing a beautiful domestic harmony and happiness.

The University, to which he was elected Fellow

in 1818, paid a high tribute to his "fidelity, intelligence, and zeal" in meeting all duties of the office.

Under Dr. Porter our church became Unitarian. The movement had been growing for a generation. We have to look to England for its immediate influences on us. Theophilus Lindsey gave up his vicarage in England in 1773 for the new truth, and sold his library for money to get to London. There was no pulpit then to receive him. He hired an auction room off the Strand, and opened the first Unitarian chapel. It was then a crime punishable by law to deny the Trinity. He faced many dangers, but worked on twenty years, gathering about him leading lawyers, members of Parliament, and men of scientific fame. He died two years after Dr. Porter preached his first sermon.

Another far greater name now appears, Joseph Priestly. Franklin met him in London, to become his enthusiastic admirer. The University of Edinburgh had given Priestly an honorary degree for his high attainments. He now became a pronounced Unitarian, and so hated was his faith that his house was burned in Birmingham in 1791. His meeting-house was also destroyed. He fled for his life to London, where the feeling was so strong against him that his own sons could not get positions because they bore the name of Priestly. He came to America, and died here in the year when this present building was erected.

Dr. Porter must have read eagerly the books of both these English leaders. Freeman indeed told Lindsey that in Boston all the ministers were reading their books. From the time that Dr. Porter declared his sympathy with a larger faith, for nearly thirty years, the name Unitarian was slowly struggling into life. Like most party names, it was given by an enemy, but finally accepted and gloried in, as the word "Christian" was by the early disciples. Channing did not define the principles of the name Unitarian until 1819, when he preached his great sermon at Jared Sparks's ordination in Baltimore. In 1787, five years after Dr. Porter's settlement, Mr. Freeman was made minister of King's Chapel by the congregation; for he was, like President Kirkland and Ware, known to be such a liberal that the bishop would not ordain him.

There was that in the Prayer Book which in honesty he could not read. He let his people know of his doubt; and they authorized him to "purge it," which he did. Few things more strikingly show how far the movement had reached than this unity of action between people and pastor of King's Chapel. What the dignitaries of the Church dared not do the people rejoiced to do. Still, Unitarianism was not an open and recognized power to be dealt with until the appointment of Henry Ware to the Cambridge Professorship. His faith was widely

known, and the very fact that he could receive such an office showed clearly that the college was won. This, too, was a signal for more vigorous organized opposition to the new heresy. A church was built in Boston; and a strong man called to be its minister, that the danger might be met upon its own ground. These are the days when it was asked contemptuously, "Are you of the Boston Religion or the Christian Religion?" It was asked in return, in a notable pamphlet by John Lowell, "Are you a Christian or a Calvinist?"

It was in 1810 that Dr. Porter preached that sermon before the ministers which settled all questions about the destiny of this church. To him, the New Testament asked but the simplest faith,— only this, "Jesus was the Christ." This, although it have for us little definite satisfaction, was most effectively used by Thatcher in his famous arguments against Andover.

We should be grateful even now that the manly independence of Dr. Porter brought this church through those stormy times to that truer faith in which we so freely rejoice.

There have been many differing talents in this ministerial succession. Welde stands for active zeal, Eliot for a philanthropy that has in it the tenderness of his Master, Nehemiah Walter was the scholar, Adams the patriot, Putnam the orator.

Of Dr. Putnam's ministry, that began in 1830 and closed in 1878, almost a half-century's duration, I need say little. To many of you, it is a thing of but yesterday. It is almost a daily occurrence to hear from some former parishioner, who comes back after years of absence, another of those familiar and characteristic illustrations of his genius as a preacher. Hundreds of times we have all heard it. One example which was given me within a few days may stand for all: "Thirty-two years ago, I heard him preach upon this text; and this was his thought." Both were then given, as if they had been just committed to memory. Almost as often, I have heard repeated words which he spoke,— not in public, but in private,— when some new experience that was bright or sad called out his sympathy. Word for word, they were treasured.

Surely, it was rare seed that could thus grow, not only in prepared and willing soil, but in all soils,— in the heart that was young and in the heart that was old, in the heart that was careless, worldly, and indifferent, in the heart that was uplifted and in the heart that was cast down. His was the gift of so speaking the word that its higher, secret meaning was revealed to the heart of the hearer. The mind thus surprised felt its worth, and cherished it in the memory.

As I promised last Sunday, I will now recall some

features of that earlier church life and history with which my older hearers are quite familiar, either through books or memory. We are helped to see how great the change has been, and, on the whole, how great for good. The average life is longer and more secure from many diseases before which our forefathers were helpless. There is a wider and kinder charity now. If any present Boston minister were to write in such spirit as some of the leading ones then wrote against their fellow-men, we should pronounce him insane or unfit for such a calling.

The road from Roxbury to Boston was not always safe from footpads. Tramps of the worst description were so common as to be a great vexation. Drunkenness was not only more frequent in proportion to the population, but of a type more riotous and vulgar. I think it would be difficult to show that any of the vices were less frequent then than now, even that of dishonesty.

As we read their story told in their private diaries and in their church records, we see upon almost every page their belief in Special Providences in a way which affects all their life and thought. Few things better mark the change of thought from that day to this. A sudden death, a new form of disease, a killing frost or wasting storm, an epidemic, an eclipse or comet,— each is certain to be construed into a sign of the divine anger.

Yet their mistake was not that they saw too much of the Divine Power. It was that they saw him chiefly in what was strange and exceptional. We have learned at last that His power works only through law. There is no law of matter or of mind that is a divine promise to man. To break even the least of these laws would be like a breaking of his word.

We have come thus to see the power in common and usual things as much as in the startling and unexpected. Many of our fears have vanished. Our trust in the universe has deepened. We no longer see the wrath of God in accident or flood. They are rather signs that we are to work more wisely to know and obey the divine ways.

An account written in 1652, twenty years after the founding of the church, has these words about Roxbury and the church: "Their streets are large and some fayre houses. Yet they have built their house for church assembly destitute and unbeautified." This unnatural simplicity has its explanation in the hatred of all that was popish. King James said to a Puritan divine, "Do you go barefoot, because the papists wear shoes and stockings?" Prayer was forbidden at burials, as it bore too close a likeness to the Catholic prayer for the dead. Only a magistrate could officiate at marriages. No ring could be used That, too, had a suggestion of

popery. Many of the peculiarities of our churches and our worship to-day would have horrified them, — the cross upon so many of our steeples, our instrumental music, stained glass, reading Scriptures without comment, responsive reading of Psalms, and even the repeating of the Lord's Prayer together. Our theology itself has hardly more changed than has our feeling toward the accessories and the forms of worship.

The building of those earliest worshippers was roofed with straw. Neither clapboard nor plaster to keep out the cold; no galleries, no spire; and for seats only rude benches placed here and there. In some towns the congregation is called together by the beat of the drum or by the blowing of a horn or shell; sometimes, even, by the display of a red flag. An armed sentry stands at the door, to whom the men give their arms as they pass in. The church is but dimly lighted. Sometimes, oiled paper is used instead of glass. The stocks are so near that the boys, as they pass in, can "shy a stone" at the poor wretch who is held in its clutches, or they may fling only a taunt to remind him of his sin. The whipping-post is near by, also the wooden cage in which, among others, those are placed who remain away from church without good excuse for more than a month.

The people, once within the church, are seated

according to rank and condition, the old men near the pulpit, the women upon one side, the men upon the other. The wives of magistrates are honored with a special seat; while the boys are thrust into a corner later into the gallery, where they are guarded by constables, armed with sticks tipped at one end with hair. The hardened end is for the boys, if rude or if they fall asleep; the softer end, for the girls, if they are inattentive. The Governor enters, preceded by four vergers bearing halberds.

The minister comes, wearing cap and cloak. His black gloves are slit at the thumb and forefinger, that he may the more easily turn his manuscript. His prayer is an hour long; his sermon often more. An hour-glass is at hand to mark the time. When the sermon is finished, some one may put a hard question to the elders, or some new law or the banns of marriage may be read. After the deacon has said solemnly, "Wherefore, as God hath prospered you, so freely give," the congregation comes forward to deposit the money for contribution.

In painful publicity may be seated, where all can see, some offender against the public moral sense, a large red letter upon the breast to tell the sin that must be thus terribly proclaimed.

The singing is done by the congregation. One or two lines are first read in a loud voice, then repeated

by the singers. Many of them knew but five or six tunes. The hymns are from the Bay Psalm Book, to which Mr. Welde and Mr. Eliot so largely contributed. We have among our worshippers still one who sang in the choir sixty-nine years ago. Another of the oldest living members has told me that the singing before this building was erected,—for her memory is distinct beyond the days when the society worshipped in what is now St. Luke's Home,—that the singing by the congregation was very hard to listen to, for every one sang as he saw fit.

Before the Revolution, Tate and Brady's Hymn Book was introduced. One of the present congregation once strongly objected to these hymns, because of their religious "fogyism." It recalled by very contrast the time when the people here were so offended at the dangerous newness of the Tate and Brady Collection. Indeed, it is difficult to find a single change in this long history that was not resisted with more or less violence, often with an intensity of feeling difficult to understand; for example, "the pueing of the meeting-house in 1693," and Rev. Thomas Walter's attempt to harmonize the singing. He writes about it plainly: "It sounded like five hundred tunes roared out at different times." Both these attempts are strongly withstood. Every separate change in the choir, especially the introduction of instruments, even the tuning-fork, creates bitter-

ness of feeling. Many times, the older people leave the church in indignation. Ebenezer Fox says: "I very well remember the first Sabbath that the bass-viol was used as an accompaniment to the singing. The old pious people were horror-struck at what they considered a sacrilegious innovation, and went out of the meeting in high dudgeon." The organ when introduced was quite as seriously opposed.

The dress of many of the congregation was a source of painful offence to Mr. Eliot. The broad belts, ruffs, and high boots of the young men; the hoods and scarfs of the young women; the wide sleeves, "slack apparel," and "immoderate great vayles," together with the growing lust for wigs, —gave the apostle occasion to utter frequent and indignant protests against such deceitful and wicked usages. But we read that the ministers were helpless before this pleasant sin, chiefly because their own wives were forward in such extravagances.

Over the minister's study door was sometimes written for his parishioners the warning words, "Be short." It did not fail to give rise to frequent witticisms at the pastor's expense, as he did not in his preaching quite practise his own text. But, when we read the record of his duties, we forgive him almost any method of saving time. It was a serious and most busy life. The week was portioned out to special duties. Four or five entire afternoons were

assigned to visits, at which all the children must be present to undergo an examination in the Catechism. The family was forewarned, and knew the hour of the minister's coming. Even the servants must be present The minister must search out the special offender in the community, and labor with him as if the minister alone were to be held responsible for the offence.

He was a kind of confessor, too, not only of all vices and crimes, but oftener must he listen to interminable tales of dreams, visions, diseased and morbid fancies, theological doubts, all of which he was expected to allay, at least to give them patient and sympathetic hearing.

His own soul, too, must be closely watched. One day in the week, he must meditate upon his own temptations and sins, and set apart a period of prayer for himself, another day for his family, another for his enemies, one for all churches, one for the sorrowing. A full and toilsome life, yet not without its gayety, its jests, its gladness. In some of the old records, after a tale of hardship and trouble, are added these words, "We were yet very happy in those days."

The spot upon which the church stands, together with the grounds round about it, has an unusual interest. It is often asked if this building is upon the site of the old ones. The records show that,

upon the building of the second house, it was voted that its erection be "as near the other as conveniently may be." The first building (1632) stood forty-two years. The Brookline people paid one-fifth of the expenses, which shows their proportion among our worshippers. The second building stood sixty-seven years. The third was burned, according to the records, by a foot-stove. The fourth was built, in 1746, so like the previous one that by the plan of the last we can easily imagine ourselves far back into the preceding century. One of the oldest parishioners remembers vividly the entrance door upon the south side. The pulpit was opposite, upon the north. A liberal number of free seats were directly before the pulpit. Upon the right of the old pulpit was first the minister's pew, then Paul Dudley's, then Colonel Lamb's, Ralph Holbrook's, Jonathan Seaver's, Joseph Warren's, and John Williams'. Upon the right of the door leading to the gallery sat J. Ruggles, Ebenezer Crafts, Mrs. Dorothy Williams. Other names are John Bowles, Ebenezer Seaver, Joseph Heath, Isaac Curtis, Ebenezer May.

Strong opposition was shown to the building of the present church, as being too extravagant and fashionable. Five buildings have stood here. The one before this was sadly shattered by the cannon of the enemy during the siege of Boston. White-

field addressed a vast gathering of people in front of the church. This hill was often the camp ground of our forces in the great days of the Revolution. Here, often was Washington. Here, the right wing of the army was inspected by Greene and Thomas. The latter held his head-quarters in Mr. Dillaway's house.

Indeed, men whose names we connect with the great moments in history have walked here and known the spot well: Thomas Dudley, who was a captain at the siege of Amiens with Henry of Navarre; men who were officers under Cromwell in that most unselfish Revolution in English history; Lafayette and officers who fell beneath the guillotine in the bloody days of the reign of terror.

Indeed, when we look back upon all that connects itself with this spot, we feel ourselves a part of what has been greatest in human effort. It lies now so far away from us that it is beginning to clothe itself in a romantic light. Its sacrifices and its heroisms, its struggles and its defeats, even its crimes, stand out upon that far background in shapes that will some day lend themselves to uses as dramatic as much ancient story that has inspired the epics of the world. We are still a little too near to feel its deeper meaning: —

> "But 'tis ever thus. What's within our ken,
> Owl-like, we blink at, and direct our search

To farthest Inde in quest of novelties.
While here at home, upon our very thresholds,
Ten thousand objects hurtle into view
Of int'rest wonderful."

I wish, in closing this retrospect, to ask if it furnishes any evidence of the decay of the Christian Church. Two hundred and fifty years must have a story to tell, from which something of hope or despair may be drawn. We look back from the present to the past, from the Christian Church as it now is to the Church as it was. Are these churches to-day doing better work for the world? Is the cause we are helping a failing one?

An English historian who has left the Church, and is its critic now, says, "There never was a time in our history when the Church was doing more for the good of England than to-day." If this is true, then the real power of the Church as a spiritual agent is a growing, not a failing cause. It is, I think, of exceeding importance that we have a right opinion about this; for we lose heart when that for which we toil is slowly losing ground. We are encouraged when we have reason to believe that our cause is strengthening, though it be as slowly as the continents take shape. We feel ourselves working for a reality in God's universe, if His power seems to be on our side.

We have a simple question to ask. Are the churches to-day — as compared with those in the

times that we have been considering — doing more for the actual needs of man? In proportion to the population, are they doing it now in America? Are their charities better directed, their energies of prayer, praise, and worship more helpfully and wisely guided to practical ends? A volume of old sermons, any of those fierce discussions which, according to Bancroft, interfered so seriously with most important social interests, shows, at least, that the practical element is now considered far more than by our ancestors. Let any one look at the long list of charities, temperance organizations, libraries, reading-rooms, which have sprung by thousands directly from the modern Church, and are to-day supported by them in our great cities, and he can hardly doubt the essential progress of the Church. It no longer holds a monopoly of good works; but, in proportion to the population, it does more of this work than ever before.

I only seek to show here that our doubts about the work of the Church are only what every generation has in its turn felt. They are, however, doubts that spring from the very nature of religious work, and prove nothing against its value.

In one of the first conversations that I ever had with Dr. Putnam, he said in some sadness, "I think the churches are in a bad way." Then, with a smile, he said, as in self-correction, "But I remember that,

a half-century ago, Dr. Porter thought that too." It is only this kind of opinion that I shall here offer. As I read this church history, I tried to find such evidences as these of what from generation to generation here in New England they thought about the prospects of the Church. Very early, Cotton left on record his despair for the Church. Eliot says, "I know not what is to become of the Church." Dutch travellers here in 1679 speak of him as the best minister, and add, "He deplored the decline of the Church in New England, and especially in Boston, so that he did not know what would be the final result."

In the next generation, Cotton Mather was so disheartened that he wrote several times to this effect: "All looks to me as if the Church would be overcome, so much vice and wickedness and doubt and indifference prevail among us." This way of speaking was not confined to the first two or three generations. Mr. Walter here found the same dark outlook; and Amos Adams, whatever he felt, had more reasons in this church to make him discouraged than any predecessor. If Dr. Porter could at the close of his life so speak to Dr. Putnam, he had far greater reason to be disheartened when he took up the work here. It is doubtful if ever in the history of this church was there greater indifference about the real objects for which the

Church exists than then. A half-century ago, it was thought by many that the Roxbury churches were dying out for lack of attendance upon worship. We find thus the history of discouragement to be unbroken.

Do we find it strange that each age should feel these discouragements? Not when we realize what the higher work of the Church is. The Church stands always for man's ideals,—for his ideals of hope and trust, and for his ideals of conduct and endeavor. To realize these ideals even a little is always hard, and must always be attended by discouragements. We as individuals have an endless struggle to keep that which is highest in us alive, and are often saddened by our failures. The Church has the same endless struggle to keep its ideas for the community alive, and will always have to feel how far short it falls of the perfect work. Yet the work has been a blessed one; it has been a blessed work here,—so blessed that the history of this society is the history of whatever has grown to be best and most valued in this community.

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